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CASE OF DEISM

Fully and Fairly Stated:

IN A

DIALOGUE

BETWIXT

Philautus and Theopistus:

AT THE

Bar of Human Reason,

Personated by *Chrisis*,

With Her

Judgment and Decision upon it.

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and fairly stated: In a Dialogue
betwixt Philautus and The-
opistus, at the Bar of Hu-
man Reason personated by
Chrisis, with her Judgment
and Decision thereupon.*

Chrisis. **G**entlemen why so ear-
ly?

Theop. We come to
waite on your Ladyship with an
humble Address, to decide a Debate
betwixt Me and *Philautus*, in Point
of Religion; who in our last Nights
Conference stiffly maintain'd, the
Deists were the only Persons that
had a Deference to your Decrees;
and that all People else were put

upon, and ridden by Authority. I being a Christian, and conscous of my untainted Loyalty, could not brook the Affront, and forbear giving him a fair Challenge to appear at your Tribunal, to stand or fall by your Award: Therefore must beg your Pardon and Patience to hear us with your usual Attention.

Chri. Nothing is more acceptable than to give Ear to Men of Parts, pleading in my Court. But having much Business on my Hand, and no Time to haggle away, I'll assume the Chair and dispatch your Controversy. Gentlemen, speak your Minds.

Phil. Madam, I am a true born English-Man; by Profession a Deist, a great Adorer of your Dictamens: We value our selves for being your most zealous Votaries, and rigid Observers of your Sanctions. We pity poor bigotted Christians, that are ridden by foreign Authority, a Yoke we have shook off long ago, and now breath a better Air, the Liberty of

a free-born Subject, bearing a Veneration to none but your worthy self.

Chri. Sir, you miscalculate, if you take me to favour Liberty, or to be an Enemy to all Authority but my own. There are, I must confess, many Admirers of me, but more of themselves. None seems more caress'd and complimented than *Chrisis*; yet none less observ'd. Every one pretends to appeal to me, but few stand to my Award. Let their Plea be never so Senseless and shocking, still I am brought upon the Stage to support it; so am become a meer Drudge to every Phrenzy and Folly. They crowd me so with the troublesome Attendance of Prejudice and Prepossession, that I am almost stiff'd. If you'll merit my Favour, dismiss this undisciplin'd Rabble: Drop all fulsome Flatteries and Reflections: And let the Merits of your Cause recommend you.

A 3

Phil.

Phil. The Merits of my Cause, Madam? did ever any Man of Sense question Reason's taking Place of all other Authority? Or that Men guided by Reason act more like themselves, than over-aw'd by Authority? This unman's us, and that alone makes us Men: It takes Nothing upon Trust, as Priest-ridden People: It neither begs nor borrows Knowledge of Foreigners; having discover'd a richer Mine in its own Soile, Reason: A Royalty of your Ladyships and therefore scorns to pin upon others Authority, Knowledge or Honesty, but barely upon its own.

Theop. Be pleas'd Madam to observe how illogically my Friend discourages; he chops upon the Rules of Reason, declares it unreasonable to submit to Foreign Authority, yet would have us build upon his own. Pray are not the Thoughts of a Deist, Matter of Fact; lodg'd as far out of our Reach, as another Man's? How

How shall we discourse him unless we credit his Words, the Proxy of his secret Thoughts? Strip Words of Authority and we cashier all human Commerce: Our Conference is at an End: Nor can we enter upon Polemicks, if we have no Reason to trust a Word the Deist says. I refer my self to your Ladyship do you adjudge it reasonable to trust no Body's Senses but our own?

Chri. By no Means: Right Reasoning allows of no such arbitrary Proceedings, to disbelieve all but one's self. Nature deals out her Favours variously; each Person has not all Things in his own Soil, but must fetch from Foreigners, as they from us. Our Ears must be employ'd as well as our Eyes, for Ideas to improve our knowledge: Besides were no Trust to be repos'd in Man, The Deist himself becomes unfit for human Society and Friendship too; for none can make a Confident whom he believes will cut his Throat.

Theop. Not to interrupt your Ladyship; a Deist that denies human Credulity, is the most unfortunate Man in the World: He dare neither eat nor drink for Fear of being poyson'd. For either he must take his Food upon Trust, or he must not: If the first, he owns human Faith in Practice, which he banters in Speculation; if the latter he is the most miserable Wretch breathing, to be tortur'd and tore in Pieces with a perpetual Horrour and Apprehension of being poyson'd by every Mouthful he takes.

Phil. You are out of your Diagnosticks, *Theophistus*, not to distinguish a *Conversable Credulity*, the Bond and Cement of human Society, from a *Traditional Credulity*, whereby Men are mis-led, into dangerous Delusions, for want of the Deceas'd to justify their Procedure.

Theop. Then I perceive by your Discourse, that we must believe the Living.

Phil.

Phil. Right: With this *Proviso*, you trust not every Fellow with your Person and Purse. We Deists are not of that Complexion, to risque our All, upon such a crazy Bottom as common Honesty; being too well acquainted with most Mens *Genius*; an intriguing, tricking, designing Set of Animals, that have ever some Fetch to gratify their Ambition or Interest.

Theop. How dare you then *Philautus* trust your own Servants, such a Crew of Caterpillars? A Man of your Figure and Fashion cannot be without Attendants: And I am inform'd you are often at the Deistical Club. Pray how do you enjoy your self in such a Crowd of designing *Sycophants*? What a sad Life must you lead, haunted with the Horror of so many Deaths? *Dionysius* the *Siculan* Tyrant was never half so miserable.

Phil. See how you are mistaken in the Idea of a Deist! None has his
Person

Person and Property better secur'd :
for being coy of his Company, he
rarely falls under those Misfortunes
of being trump'd upon by others,
the credulous Vulgar are liable
to.

Theop. Then withal all your Pre-
cautions you must trust somebody.

Phil. True; but only such as are
of Standard Worth and Integrity.

Theop. I am glad you'll own at
length such a Thing as moral Ho-
nesty. I thought you had quite dis-
carded it, and look'd upon the whole
World in a *Lump*, as a Pack of Im-
postors.

Phil. Why do you affront me, to
take me for such a Profligate, to
cashier all Maximes of Morality?
How could we secure our own Pro-
perty or Person, were the Fences
of Fidelity flung down, Justice and
Equity laid waste? How were it
possible to distinguish a Knave from
an honest Man, Truth from False-
hood without a Standard to gage
'em

'em by? Villany is only the Reverse of Justice and Probity; Forgery abominable, being cross upon Truth; Vice unreasonable, because it deviates from our darling Rule, Human Reason: Nor would I have you think a Deist so mortify'd a Man, to preach up a Doctrine repugnant to his own Ease, to be haunted with the Apprehension, that every Man he deals with, has a Design upon his Life.

Chri. I need not sentence you *Philautus*, for denying human Faith by wholesale, having attoned for your Error, by owning a Necessity of Moral Honesty among Mortals to support human Society; and with Reason: For how are these two Notions consistent: First to Banter your Adversary for pinning his Faith upon human Authority in the Concern of his Soul, and then with the same Breath, to own a Necessity of human Faith for the good of your Body, for fear of being oblig'd to go to Grass, and herd with your Horses.

Pray

Pray, Sir, forbear for the future, to decry human Credulity in your Neighbour, which you must be forc'd to Practise on several Emergencies your self.

Phil. Madam, *Theopistus* has not return'd me a categorical Answer to that Branch of my Distinction, relating to a *Conversable* and *Traditional* Credulity. The Stress of my Cause lies much in the right Understanding of this Notion. No Deist, whatever he pretend to in Theory, will disown a *Conversable Credulity* in Practice. He's no Fool to disband from all human Society for want of Faith, and such a Faith too, as excludes a Probability of being murder'd by his menial Servant; such a Thought would make him very uneasie, would delute his Pleasures, and damp all his Delights. But he positively denies *Traditional Credulity*: I mean such a human Faith as is bottom'd upon mouldy Manuscripts, Testimonies of Antiquarians all dead and rotten: These

These superannuated and immemorial Traditions; these Copies of Copies, Translations of Translations; these Rapsodies of Records; Matters of Fact transacted above a thousand Years and upwards, weakens very much their Authority: Add the multitudes of designing Men in all Ages: What Scriptures? What Records own'd by Christians themselves so sacred, that has not been profain'd, maim'd, and misrepresented? Who but a Madman, would build his Salvation on such a sandy Foundation as *Traditional Credulity*? Could a solid and satisfactory Answer be given to this Objection, then I should be startled in my Religion; otherwise I shall remain as stiff a Deist as ever.

Chri. Philautus values himself much upon this Distinction of a *Conversable* and *Traditional Faith*: This is the Corner-Stone of Deism: What have you to offer *Theopistus*? You know my Temper is not to condemn any Man without Reason.

Theop.

Theop. Madam, my friend *Philautus*'s Method of Arguing clashes with it self. First to own the Faith of the Living, and then to deny Authority to the Registers and Records of the Dead : Tell me *Philautus*, who attests the Truth of these Records, the Living, or the Dead ?

Phil. The Living ; for I do not love to Conjure up *Hob-Goblins*, or to deal with the Dead.

Theop. Then I hope we may believe 'em, if Men of standard worth Attest 'em, and no Body living of Honour or Honesty dispute 'em ; unless you'll be stranded on the same Shelve you tow'd off by your subtil Distinction of a *Conversable* and *Traditional Credulity*, with such Difficulty and Danger of being kick'd out of human Society. What ? Have not you already own'd, as you must, of Necessity, certain tokens to distinguish Knavery from Honesty, Truth from Falshood, Vice from Vertue ; and now to forget your self, so soon,

to

to disbelieve all Men in the Delivery of Records, and authenticated Writings, because there are some tricking and intriguing Persons? What an extravagant way of Reasoning is this? There are several Knaves, Cheats, and Impostors in the World; therefore none is to be trusted; there's no such Thing as Truth, or Honesty; but all Mankind combine to forge Writings to cheat themselves, and damn their Souls: An admirable Inference! A sufficient Motive for a Christian to turn Deist, who dubbs himself and his Associates a Set of Lying, Cheating, Dissembling Knaves!

Phil. Hold; not so fast *Theopistus*: Tho' we allow some of the Living Credit in what they attest of their own Knowledge, in reference to the Dead; provided they be of an untarnish'd Reputation: Yet it seems morally *Impossible* to be ascertain'd of the Truth of *Factum's*, handed down for so many successive Centuries.
The

The Living can only give *Affidavit* of contemporary Transactions, and that they have not adulterated Registers receiv'd from their immediate Ancestors; but cannot attest their Progenitor's honesty in preceding Ages. How do you know *Theopistus*, that these individual Records were nor forg'd by your Ancestors some Centuries ago? These Writings running through so many fallible Fingers, makes the Stream more muddy; for I must not only rely on the honesty of the present Age, but on all preceding Ages to the Date of these Indentures.

Chri. This Reply, *Theopistus*, pinches the Question; unless you can give a solid Reason why Matters of Fact transacted a thousand Years and upwards, cannot be credited without a prudent Doubt of the contrary, I must give Sentence in favour of *Philautus*. Being resolv'd to hold the Ballance betwixt you, as steady as I can, without leaning to either side:
Nothing

Nothing being able to determine me,
but the Dint of Reason.

Theop. First, *Philautus's* Discourse
is built upon a false Bottom; as if
known Truth could wear away like
old Cloaths with Age: Durance of
Time is no Disadvantage, but the
greatest Emolument imaginable to
Truth. Forgery indeed, and Fals-
hood can never bear the Test. Time
detects all *Impostures*: These very
Shams that pass currant with the
Vulgar for want of Time to discover
them, are brought to Light in time.
Antiquity is so far from prejudicing
Truth, and pleading for Falshood;
that it brightens and burnishes the
first, but blackens and abolishes the
latter. Truth is like the Sun overcast
for a Time with Storms and Tem-
pests, yet never looses its Lustre, but
rises brighter from its Cloud. Truth
may be be darken'd and dim'd with
Calumnies and Persecutions, but ne-
ver extinguish'd.

B

Second-

Secondly, *Philautus*, he who pretends to be such a professed Enemy to Antiquity, disbelieves himself. What? Have not I heard him boast of the Antiquity of his Title, to such Lordships, Lands and Tenements? How his own Deeds have been scann'd and canvas'd in all the Courts of *England*, and yet stood the Shock at all Times; the Bench ever giving its Verdict in Favour of his undoubted Right, to the Confusion of all unjust Aggressors? And does he pretend there's no trusting Antiquity out of the Reach of the present Age? First let him renounce his own Pretensions to Antiquity, and then let him reason against it. If he can have undoubted Right to his Estate from Records and Writings of several Centuries standing, why not another? I hope he'll not allow the Antiquity of his Title can prejudice the Equity of his Plea; tho' it stood the Shock of several Centuries, and run through the fallible Fingers

Fingers of his Ancestors: Why should other Registers be reputed dubious, being more universally and better attested than his own? But admit Wills, Deeds, Conveyances of private Rights and Interests may be forg'd; still a Possibility gives no Probable Grounds to believe 'em so; mostly when juridically examin'd, and never found to have a Flaw: To term such a Title uncertain, and their own undoubted, is an unparallel'd Piece of Impudence.

Thirdly, *Philautus* in his Objection disputes not only his own and his Neighbours uncontestable Rights and Records; but also evident Matters of Fact, own'd by the whole World, being Objects of innumerable Person's Senses and Experience, and embodied in the Publick Registers both of Church and State, *viz.* Whether there was such a Man as *Moses*, that taught the Jews such a Law, wrought such Miracles as are recounted in his *Pentateuch*; Whether there

was such a Person as *Jesus Christ*, or his Apostles, that preach'd and propagated Christianity, and wrought Miracles in Ratification of it. Whether there ever was such a Man in Being as *Julius Cæsar*, whether he ever warr'd with his Country, or was murdered in the Roman Senate: In a Word, whether there ever was such a Man as *William the Conqueror*, that subdued *England*; *Henry the VIII.* the Civil Wars; or *Charles the 1st's* Decollation. For the Histories counting these *Factum's* have run through many fallible Fingers, have been copy'd and recopy'd; had several Versions and Editions: Yet who but a *Bedlam* would sceptize upon these Matters of Fact, mostly such as relate to Religion; having been scann'd and canvass'd most rigorously by her Enemies in all Ages, but still triumph'd over Error, maugre all the Attempts of Men and Devils. My Antagonist bottoms his Objection upon an erroneous Supposition, *viz.*
 That

That the Present Age could not be ascertain'd of what was handed down by the immediate Age and so upwards ; as if the whole World dyed all on a Day, and their Descendants sprung up like Mushrooms or *Cadmus's* Race, without knowledge of Ancient Transactions. It's a rude Fancy to imagine that the Death of private Persons can prejudice the Authority of publick Records ; entire Corporations and whole Kingdoms remaining to attest the Truth of them. Tell me, Is it possible ; publick Transactions guarded with innumerable Circumstances of Time, Place, Persons, with an open Appeal to the Objects of every Man's Sense and Experience, and cross upon their Interest, should be foisted in, and never be detected ? Not an honest Man breathing, nay not a Friend to be found to himself to give Check to the Forgery ? But that entire Provinces, whole Kingdoms, good and bad should combine to delude

themselves into a Belief of publick *Factum's* with all their appendants, to be most true and handed down to 'em for several Centuries, tho' they had neither heard, seen, or known any such Thing? Let us illustrate my Assertion with some Instances.

First, *Moses* in *Exod. c. 14.* recounts a miraculous Passage of the *Israelites* through the *Red-Sea* dry shod, the watery Element branching it self into Walls of Defence to shelter 'em from the Insults of the Ocean as well as their Enemies: Where in recording the Favour he appeals to the Senses, and Experience of 600000 Persons, Eye-Witnesses of God's wonderful Providence to 'em, and many of 'em his Enemies too, who, no doubt on't, would have detected the Imposture, had he trump'd upon 'em such notorious Falsities: Nor was it possible to make a whole Nation believe, what all could attest of their own Knowledge, was a
loud

Lye, having neither seen nor heard of such a miraculous Adventure. Tell me, is it possible to make the whole City of *London* believe, that Man Woman and Child had gone dry shod over the *Thames* at full Tide, the Waters ranging themselves into Bulwarks to secure their Passage; had they neither heard seen or experienc'd any such Thing? Is it credible that any Man should gull a whole Nation with a Set of sham Laws, coaxing the People with the Product of his own visionary Imagination, and ascertaining 'em that these Inventions were the municipal Laws of the Country and that they themselves had practis'd 'em and celebrated annual Solemnities for these subsequent Favours? *Viz.* Their Delivery from the *Agyptian* Slavery; for having fed 600000 Persons with Heavenly *Manna*,
 drawn Water out of a dry
 Rock: Again that their
 Primogeniture had been consecra-

*Deut. c. 11.
 c. 31. Num. 8.*

ted to God by a standing Law ; That they had been all circumcis'd till that very Day, and that they had observ'd annual Feasts and Fasts in Recognition of these miraculous Favours. Now is it possible that these *Factum's* should be feign'd, tho' pretended to have been done never so long ago ? For either they must be forg'd when dated, or in after Ages: Not the first, there being thousands alive their Contemporary's to convict them by their own Experience of the Forgery ; so could never gain Credit ; unless an Impostor should make the whole World believe that he and his Associates had wrought strange Wonders in their Presence, and in the Face of their Enemies too ; and that they had all celebrated annual Solemnities in Memory of them, tho' they had never heard or seen any such Thing. Nor could these fabulous *Factum's* be usher'd in by an *ante* or *after* Date ; That God had wrought Wonders in their Behalf,

had

had led 'em through the Red-Sea dry shod, and drown'd their Enemy in its Waves; had fed them with Celestial *Manna*; conducted 'em thro' the Desert with a cloud by Day, and a Pillar of Light by Night; that their Primogeniture was all along dedicated to God, and they themselves underwent the Painful Ceremony of Circumcision. Is it credible any Man could palm such a Pack of Impostures upon a whole Nation with an open Appeal to their own Experience to attest the Truth of them, and every Man and Mother's Son believe 'em, tho' they had neither heard nor seen such Miracles, or celebrated any such Observances. Should any one endeavour to persuade a whole Nation to credit such Impostures, wou'd not they send him to *Bedlam*? What do you think of a Deist, who under Colour of Reason out-faces all Antiquity, Unmans all Mankind,

turns

turns 'em into Fools, to make himself pass for a Wit? Let *Moses* withdraw, and let us see what he says to another Matter of Fact of a later Date, *viz.* That there was extant such a Man as *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles; that he preach'd and practis'd such Doctrine, as is recorded in Scripture, and wrought Miracles in its Ratification.

First, This is so shining a Matter of Fact, so celebrated by all Authors, Registers and Writers, that before the Deists took Date, never was there known any Man so impudent as to disown it: This is so notorious a Truth, that I blush for a Deist, being the only Man so brazen'd to outface all Antiquity. Turks, Jews, Gentils Confirm it, nay Devils themselves are ashamed to deny it; but not so the Deist. *Porphry, Lucian, Julian, Mahomet*, a Pack of Apostates, Cheats, Persecutors of Christianity durst not deny the Doctrine and Miracles of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles to be
publick

publick Matters of Fact transacted in the Face of the whole World: But us'd their utmost Efforts to disgrace him and his Adherents; attributing his wonderful Works to the Devil and not to Divine Power.

Secondly, All the Monuments in the Universe, own a Time, when there was no such Doctrine as Christianity extant. If *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles did not preach, teach and establish it, as all Antiquity attest, who is the Author? How it came to be introduc'd and implanted in the World, maugre all Opposition from Men and Devils, and none knew when, where and how it obtain'd and was establish'd, is the Wonder of Wonders; nor if you'll believe a Deist, that disputes his own Authority, is it possible to know it, if no Antiquity, either of Friend or Foe is to be trusted.

Thirdly, Either the Matters of Fact, the Doctrine and Miracles of *Jesus Christ* were forg'd when dated

or

or in after Ages; not the first, it being impossible so many different Transactions with all their Collateral Circumstances of Time, Place, Persons; Raising so many Dead to Life; curing Incurable Distempers not in Corners, but at Noon-Day in the Face of the whole World, and his Enemies too (had they been Lyes, Shams, Forgeries) should have found any Credit: Would not his Rivals have been glad of the Advantage to decry them? Wou'd such manifest Impostures have pass'd Muster, gain'd such Reputation with his Enemies not to countervene the Facts, tho' they oppos'd him and his Apostles in all things else? Nor is it possible these *Factums* should be stamp'd with Authority by Church-Men in after Ages, *viz.* That there had been such a Man as *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, who preach'd and taught a Doctrine repugnant to Flesh and Blood, had ratified it with innumerable Signs and Miracles: That
several

several Festivals had been observ'd in all Ages from the Date of our Redemption without Interruption, through the whole Christian World to that very Time, as all the Ecclesiastical Registers ascertain us; that Christ himself had deputed a Set of Men to perpetuate his Preachments and Doctrines: That all the World had been baptiz'd in his Name. 'Tis not possible, I say, these Things should have been forg'd in afterAges, with an open Appeal to the Sense and Experience of all Mankind; had there been no such Persons in the World as *Jesus Christ* and his Twelve Apostles; had they never Preach'd such Doctrine, never wrought such Miracles; had there never been heard or seen such a Set of Men as Bishops, Priests, &c. deputed for the Ministry of his Doctrine; but all had been a mere Foolery and Fiction the whole World could contradict of their own Knowledge. Pray tell me would these Men that
forg'd

forg'd such loud Lyes repugnant to every Mans Senses and Experience, be reputed nice, pious, prudent Men, and their Fables for Oracles, not by one Clan of Men, but the whole Christian World? Could any one make all People believe that for 1700 Years successively all Christians were born with one Eye? Would not every Christian that had two Eyes in his Head, give him the Lye, and be so far from regarding such a Person as an Apostle or Preacher of God's Word; that he would be hiss'd and hooted off the Stage, as the most loud Lyar breathing? This granted, how is it possible, that any Man could bubble the whole World in after Ages with such a Sham; viz. that they were all Christen'd in *Jesus Christ's* Name, and kept annual Observances of his Nativity, Resurrection and Ascension in Memory of his Mercies and Miracles; in case none had ever heard or seen or known any such Thing?

Again

Again is it probable, for any Man or Club of Men, to delude a whole Nation into a Beleif; that all their publick Records, Writers and Statute-Books ascertain'd 'em successively, that there was such a Man as *Charles Stuart the I. King of England*, Son of *James the I. King of the Scots*; That his own Subjects rebell'd against him, Impleaded, Arraign'd, Condemn'd and Beheaded him at *White-Hall* in *London*, and that an annual Fast or Humiliation Day was celebrated in Memory and Detestation of that horrid Paricide: Is it probable I say, for an Impostor to make such a Fact be believed by a whole Nation, with all the additional Circumstances of his Life, Death, Lineage, and Manner of his Execution; had there been no such Man, no such civil Wars, no such Tryal, no such Condemnation or Decollation? These are publick Cheats impossible to be flurr'd upon a whole Kingdom: For when ever they

they were hatch'd the whole Nation would fly in the Face of the Forger, and convince him of falsity in every Circumstance, being so nearly concern'd to justify their Ancestors from the Imputations of such a horrid Crime. This own'd which cannot reasonably be disputed, how is it possible that all these Matters of Fact relating to *Jesus Christ's* Life and Death, Doctrine and Miracles, with all the Circumstantials of his Sufferings in the *Metropolis of Palestine* at Noon-Day, in the View of all the World, and recorded by the Enemies of Christianity both Jew and Gentile, should be forg'd in the subsequent Centuries, if there never was such a Man or Men as *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles; If they never preach'd such a Doctrine, rais'd no Dead Men to Life, cur'd no Diseases, had no Profelytes to perpetuate his Doctrine, none ever baptized in his Name, receiv'd his Sacraments, or observ'd any Feasts or

Fasts

Fasts in Memory of his Myſteries :
 This Forgery is impoſſible to be fa-
 ther'd upon one Nation, much more
 upon the whole World. Nay what
 is ſtill more ſurpriſing, is, that the
 Jewiſh Nation profeſs'd Enemies to
Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould hear this Do-
 ctine preach'd by his Apoſtles in
 publick Aſſemblies; *viz.* That the
 Jews were the Men that tryed, con-
 demn'd and crucified him; that his
 Blood was upon their Nation, as
Philo and *Joſeph* their own Antiqua-
 rians, Men of the greateſt Probity
 and Learning amongſt 'em, attelt;
 and none deny it: And muſt we
 ſtill turn Scepticks, diſpute whether
 there ever was ſuch a Perſon as *Je-
 ſus Chriſt*, whether ever he preach'd
 ſuch Doctrines as is taught by Chri-
 ſtians, or wrought ſuch Miracles in
 Ratification of it? This is ſuch a
 ſuperlative Piece of Folly as per-
 chance was never recorded in Hi-
 ſtory. Should not wee look upon
 ſuch an one fit for *Bedlam*, that
 C would

would dispute the *Saxons* or *William the Conqueror's* invading this Realm (Yet my Matters of Fact, tho' incontestable, were sign'd and seal'd with the Blood of infinite Martyrs) What Judgment then can we frame of a *Deist*, that disbelieves *Christian* Doctrine and Miracles more solemnly celebrated, more universally known and better attested, being Matters of Fact of the last Importance, the Concern of Man's Eternal Woe or Welfare, asserted by Clouds of unexceptionable Witnesses stamping their Testimonies with their own Blood?

Chri. Enough *Theopistus* to justify Traditional Credulity, when fortify'd by Matter of Fact, enregister'd in publick Records with all their Appurtenances, seen, heard and attested with Crouds of unquestionable Witnesses, with annual Observances celebrated from the Date thereof in Recognition of the Favours and Memory of the Mysteries
 preach'd

preach'd and taught by *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles. I must own you have demonstrated by Dint of Reason, the Standard of my Actions, that a Person who controverts Matters of Fact by you alledg'd, must divest himself of his own Rights and Reason too. If these *Factum's* be not evident, how is it possible to demonstrate any to be so? If he believes his own Assertion, what Claim can he pretend to private Writings, seeing publick Records must not be trusted? Well, *Philautus*, what have you to say for your self?

Phil. Grant, *Theopistus* discourses, probably of Transactions own'd and attested by publick Records; Yet how does he demonstrate 'em to be evidently credible without a prudent Doubt to the Contrary? Seing *Turks*, *Brachmans* and *Bonzyes* may be as stiff for their pretended Matters of Fact enregister'd in their superstitious Records? Does not the

whole Pagan World maintain their fabulous Doctrine with as much Warmth, as the Christians their Maxims and Mysteries? What? Have not they their Religious Observances, Fasts, Feasts, Sacrifices, Prelacy, Priesthood as well as you? Can we imagine so many thinking Men are more blinded and bigotted, than Christians? See how zealous they are in their Way, the Mussel-Men are full out as devoted to *Mahomet* as you to *Jesus Christ*, and profess as much Gogle and Grimace: What? Have not they their Religious Orders and Institutions in as great Formality as you? The exterior Discipline of the *Brachmans* and *Bonzies* appear as rigorous in hacking and hewing their Members as the most bigotted Papists; and as to their interiour, may be as well intentioned. If then Turcism and Heathenism be so well disciplin'd in their outward Worship, and as confident in their inward Belief of their Errors,

Errors, how do we know, but Christians are as Priest-ridden as they? Why then may not we credit Matters of Fact recorded by them, as well as what is attested by Christians? And in the Sequel set *Mahometism* and *Polytheism* on the same Level with *Christianism*.?

Chri. Theopist, this is a tough Objection; how will you acquit your self of it, for 'tis the *Achilles* of the Cause? You must therefore make it appear at my Tribunal, that the Christian has the Advantage over all other Sects, and that a Man is bound by the Rules of Reason to give the Deference to the first and not to the latter. I can assure you, this Difficulty has made more Deists, than all other Arguments.

Theop. Madam, I took *Philautus* to be a Man of a deeper Reach, than to proportion the Truth of Things by Appearances, to absolve or condemn Religion upon the bare Word

of any contending Parties, let their Pretensions be never so pious. Christianity is more cautious, than to canonize Persons upon their own *affidavit*. If Goggle and Grimace be our Credentials, a Knave has as good a Plea, as an honest Man: Set aside Marks and Motives of Credibility, in the Eye all are upon equal Terms. In case Matters of Fact mention'd by *Mahomet* in his *Alcoran*, the Visions and Dreams, he pretends to, be on the same footing with the Miracles and Doctrine of *Jesus Christ*, if Christianity be no better guarded with Motives, than Mahometism or Polytheism, then *Philautus* might have Colour for his Critiques in Religion. But to pretend the bare Name and shew of Religion, is Reason enough to run down all true Religion, is to set Sense and your Ladyships Laws at Defiance, to put Knavery and Honesty, Truth and Falshood in a Parallel.

To commence our Answer from Mahometism, which Sect seems to bid fareft next to Judaism for a Shew of Religion. I own it has its Priests, Forms and Ceremonies. The Turks, 'tis true have *Caravans*, *Ramazans*, Religious Orders, and worship God after *Mahomet's* Fashion: But what evident Matters of Fact can they challenge, or Miracles wrought in Ratification of this Perswasion? I mean such as have been done not in Corners, in Hugger-Mugger, but in the Face of the whole World, with an Appeal to every Man's Senses and Experience? What Marks or Motives has Turcism or Polytheism to induce a Rational Man to believe its Doctrine, divine Revelation? Where is *Mahomet's* Commission and Credentials from God? Is there any Thing but his own Word? What's the Alcoranical Gospel, but a Legendary Fable fraught with Frenzy and Carnalities? How was't propagated? Without Arms, with Piety, Patience,

ence, Justice and Charity ? No, but
 by Apostacy, Oppression and Tyranny.
 What sort of Persons were his
 Apostles ? Apostate Christians, Cruel,
 Debauch'd Ambitious, Enthusiastical
 Visionaries, that implanted their
 Religion with Fire and Sword.
 What Matters of Fact scann'd and
 canvass'd in the Face of the World,
 and standing the Test of all Times, to
 evidence the Truth of his Doctrine ?
 Read all Antiquity about its Rise.
 Never could Mahometism or its
 Master, demonstrate himself either
 by Doctrine, Miracles or Devotion,
 to be God's Emissary, but the Devils,
 bearing the Mark of the Beast
 Hypocrisy and Oppression always
 about him. What is said of Mahometism,
 suites with any other Heathenish
 Superstition ; which may indeed
 stalk under the Colour of Godliness,
 as any other Imposture ; but can never
 demonstrate its Superstition to be
 divine Institution, either as to the
 Doctrine or Doctors, the
 Reve-

Revelation or Revealers : When it comes to the Test, it is unworthy of Man to imagine, much more of God to inspire : And yet the rational Deist is so unreasonable as to set it on the same Foot with Christianity, that is stor'd with all the Marks and Motives a Rational Man can prudently require to make it credible.

Chri. I own *Theopistus*, the Miraculous Effects wrought by *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles in Ratification of Christianity, in View of the whole World, is so pregnant a Proof, that no *Ottoman* Argument or Heathenish Superstition can be compar'd with it. Yet methinks it does not evidently demonstrate it divine, Could you make it out in my Presence, that it has such distinguishing Matters and Motives, as no other Sect can pretend to, you'll gain your Cause in the most rigid Court without Controversy. The main Stress of *Philautus's* Objection

jection lies in this, to give a substantial Reason, besides what has been already offer'd, why a Man ought to be a Christian, rather than a Deist, Jew, Heathen or Mahometan.

Theop. Tho' I have said enough, to demonstrate the Existency of such a Man as *Jesus Christ* and of his Apostles, that preach'd and implanted such a divine Doctrine, as is recorded in the publick Annals both of Church and State; a Doctrine fortify'd with supernatural Signs and Wonders, done in View of the whole World, and Enemies too: Yet for *Philautus's* greater Conviction, I shall demonstrate it Paramount to all other Sects and Professions. First, From the Persons that preach'd it: Secondly, From the Doctrine preached: Thirdly, From the miraculous Manner of its Propagation. These three Properties are unalienable from Truth, and wide of all Turkish Superstition, or Heathenish Fiction, and consequently prove it could not possibly

bly be the Invention of Man, but must of Necessity be inspir'd by God.

The first Teacher of Christianity was *Jesus Christ* a divine Person, the *Messias* and Expectation of Nations and God himself. This Truth I will not evince by Christian Records (being suspected without Grounds, by a Deist;) but from Jewish Writers, and profess'd Enemies to Christianity: Such Records, I say, could not possibly be forg'd in Favour of it. Read and peruse the Jewish Writ, their most authentick Registers, in *the 49 of Gen. the 9. c. of Dan. the 88. Psalm of David, the 7. of Esa. the 11, 19, 29, 42, 52, 53. Chap. of the same Prophet, the 5. of Micheas. Jerem. 31. Malac. 3. Ose. 11. Zac. 9. the 37, 67, 71, Psalm.* Here and in innumerable Places, you'll find the *Messias* foretold several Centuries before his Coming, with all the Appurtenances of his Life, Death, Resurrection, the Time of his Birth, the Place, the Stem, or Stock of his
De-

Descent, *viz.* the House of *David*: That a Star should arise in *Jacob*, *Numb.* 24. Infants be massacred at his Coming: That he would work strange Wonders, cure all Diseases, and in Requital of his Favours be Crucified, Darkness over-shadowing the Face of the Universe; and then rise again from Death to Life. In a Word, this *Messias* should be *God*, as is evinc'd by the same Predictions of *Esa.* c. 9, v. 6. *A Child is born to us, a Son is given to us, his Name shall be call'd God.* Now least any Person might miscalculate him for a great Prophet, because they are sometimes styl'd by Scripture *Gods*. The same Jewish Prophet, c. 34. ascertains us, that he means antonomastically *God* by Nature: Saying, *God himself will come and save us.* But it's manifest none of *God's* Prophets can in Truth be call'd *God himself*; the Inference is evident, the *Messias* being denominated *God* himself by the Jewish Records, he
must

must be *God* in a strict, proper Sense. But the greatest Demonstration of all for the *Messias's* Divinity is, that the Word *Jehova* which was call'd *Tetragrammaton*, a Title peculiar to God, and never imparted to any Creature, as the Jewish *Rabbies* attest, is almost every where in their Bible attributed to *Christ*; mostly in the 33. cap. of *Jerem.* v. 16, in which Place the *Messias* is denominated *Jehova Justus noster*, or as the Hebrew Version *Jehova our Justice*. All the ancient *Rabbies* from these evident and incontestable Testimonies from their own Scripture were convinc'd of their *Messias's* Divinity.

But why do we only insist upon Jewish Records? What? Did not Prophetesses even among the Gentils, inspir'd by God, as appears by the Truth of their Predictions, according to *Marcus Varro* a Heathen Historiographer, and *Fenestella* another of the
same

same Gang, with *Tully. Lib.*
The Sybils. 1. de Divin. foretel stupen-
 dious Things of *Jesus Christ*,
 particularising his very Name, the
 Manner of his Birth, Death, Resur-
 rection ; and that he should be the
 Son of God ? Besides, these Predictions,
 as the same *Cicero* observes, were in
 such Veneration, that the *Romans*
 collected 'em from all Parts, and
 deposited them in their primary
Archivium, the Capitol, with all ima-
 ginable Caution and Care, in Cu-
 stody of their High-Priest and Head
 Magistrates, under several Locks and
 Keys for fear of being Adulterated .
 And these very Records were pro-
 duc'd by the Christian Church in
 her Infancy, as undeniable Proofs
 against the most headdy and obstinate
 Heathens ; and none disputed their
 Authority being the most sacred and
 authentick Writings amongst them.
 In these Predictions of the *Erythrean*
Sybil, reported by the Heathen Hi-
 storiographers, long before our Sa-
 viour's

viour's Birth, and consequently not forg'd by Christians, 'tis recorded that the *Messias* should cure all Infirmities; make the Deaf hear, the Dumb speak, the Blind see: That he should feed 5000 Persons with five Loaves and two Fishes, and that twelve Baskets should be fill'd with the Fragments: That he should be Spit upon, Whipt, Crownd with Thorns, have Gall and Vinegar given him to drink, the Veil of the Temple should be rent, Darkness cover the Face of the Earth for three Hours; and after three Days Sleep, he should rise from Death to Life. Thus the *Sybil*.

Now that all these Predictions of *Jew* and *Gentile* concenter exactly in the Person of *Jesus Christ*, and no other, is no less evident by the Authority aforesaid. First, Because Heathens, Jews and Christians unanimously accord both as to the Time and Place of *Jesus Christ's* Birth. He was born in *Bethlehem*, as prophesy'd

phesy'd by *Micheas*, c. 5. In the De-
 clenſion of *Augustus Caesar's* Reign,
 when *Herod* a Foreigner weilded the
 Scepter of *Juda*, as 'twas foretold
 by *Jacob*, 2000 Years before his Co-
 ming *Gen. c. 49. The Scepter ſhall*
not be taken from Juda till he come who
is to be ſent, the Expectation of Nations.
Jeſus Chriſt, as 'twas prophe-
 cy'd of the *Meffias* deſcended li-
 neally from the Houſe of *David*:
 That this was ſo, is evident by the
 Jewish *Talmud*, his Enemies Regi-
 ſter, who convinc'd and daz'd by
 the Luſtre of Truth, are oblig'd to
 own it in expreſs Terms. *Jeſus the*
Nazarene Crucified, was of the Blood
Royal of David. *Balaam* as well as
 the *Sybilſ* foretold many Centuries
 before his Appearance in the World,
 that a Star ſhould ariſe in *Jacob*:
Numb. 24. And pray was not the
 Prediction diſcharg'd at our Saviour's
 Birth, not only as his own Evan-
 gelists but the very Heathens them-
 ſelves aſcertain us. *Pliny lib. 2. c. 25.*
Chara-

Charemon, Calcidius tells us, that a
 Star or Comet appear'd about that
 Time and was in such Veneration
 that the whole World adored it
toto Orbe colitur. Did Jew
 and Gentile Prophecy the
 stupendious Wonders and
 Miracles that should be
 perpetrated by the *Messias*? Yes:
 And does not *Joseph* the Jew, and
Mahomet the Turk, Men of the most
 topping Authority in their Sect de-
 clare it? The first in his *Annals*
Lib. 18. c. 7. *There was a Man, if it*
may be lawful to call him a Man, a
Worker of most wonderful Miracles,
speaking of Jesus the Nazarene; and
the latter Mahomet, in his Alcoran
Azoor. 1, 4, 12. owns him a great Pro-
phet, and to have wrought his Mira-
cles by the Spirit and Power of God.
 Was't not also prophecy'd, by *Esa.*
 and the *Sybil* above mentioned, that
Jesus the *Messias* and Expectation of
 Nations, should be Murder'd and
 Crucifi'd by his own People? And
 D do

Mars. Ficin.
Tra&. de stella.
Sybilla Samia.

And do not the Jewish Records and all the World own with *Joseph Lib. 18. c. 4. Antiq.* That the Prince of the Jews having accus'd and deliver'd over Jesus to Pilate, that was Governour of Jury for the Roman Emperour, he adjudged him to the Cross? Did not the Sybils foretel long before our Saviour's Passion, that the Veil of the Temple should be rent, and Darkness cover the Face of the Earth? And does not *Phlegon*, an exact Hea-then Cronologer, assert the same to have happen'd in the eighteenth Year of *Tiberius Caesar's* Reign, the very Time our Saviour suffer'd? In a Word, the Jewish Annals, as well as the Gentil's Sybils, inform us of another more distinguishing Passage of the *Messias, viz.* That he should rise the third Day from Death to Life: An evident Argument of his Divinity. And pray does not *Joseph* the Jew ascertain us, that the same was made good to a Tittle in Jesus? Who was Crucifi'd by Pilate, appear'd

to his Disciples the Third Day having reassum'd Life. Lib. 4. de Antiq. This Resurrection and Crucifixion of *Jesus* was so notorious a Matter of Fact, that this celebrated Jewish Author could not conceal it tho' it was to his own Nations discredit, that put him to Death. Whatever the Four Evangelists recount of *Jesus Christ*, their Master's Birth, Life, Death, Doctrine and Miracles jumps exactly with the Records both of *Jew* and *Gentile*; so it's hard to determine whether his Friends or his Enemies be more positive in each particular.

Tell me now, is it possible both *Jew* and *Gentile* should conspire to feign such loud Lies in Favour of their Enemies, and set up an Impostor to defeat their own Religion? Suppose they would have combin'd with their Adversaries to delude themselves; is it probable their Predictions of so ancient a Date before, at different Times, by disparate Persons, and in distant Places, should all

center in the same individual Person *Jesus Christ*? Either these Predictions were true or false: If the first, then *Jesus Christ* is the true *Messias*, the Expectation of Nations and God himself; if false, is it not a most miraculous Effect that so many Lyers, of such different Ends and Interests, and distant from each other, should jump exactly in their Stories with all their appendant Circumstances of Time, Place, Persons, Actions, tho' foretold several hundreds of Years, not to say thousands before his Appearance in the World; when there was no Prospect of *Jesus Christ's* Incarnation, his working such Wonders, curing all Manner of Ailements, dying upon an ignominious Cross, and rising the third Day from Death to Life? Nay, is there any Shew of Sense, that *Mahomet* a profess'd Enemy of Christianity, shou'd declare in his own Gospel, that *Jesus was a great Prophet and wrought Miracles*

acles by the Power and Spirit of God,
 and *Joseph* the Jew cabal with him
 and the four Evangelists, against his
 own Religion, in his eighteenth and
 fourth Book of Antiquities? In case
 these *Faëctum's* recounted of *Christ*
 and his Apostles, be nothing
 but Fables devis'd by Christians,
 they are such improbable ones, as
 Nothing but a credulous Deist that
 pretends to believe Nothing, will
 credit. Oh how infinitely does the
 Credulity of a Deist surpass that of
 a Christian! For Christians only be-
 lieve such Mysteries credible as are
 grounded upon good Motives and
 Marks of Credibility, but a Deist
 chops upon Reason, believes credible
 Things, as Christian Doctrine, incre-
 dible; and incredible Things, the
 Denial of all human and divine Faith,
 to be credible. Let the blasphemous
 Deist conjure up if he please, all the
 Impostors that were ever extant, *Si-*
mon Magus, Mahomet, Apollonius, &c.
 he'll never cope with Christianity.

Pray what Predictions of a 1000 or 500 Years standing, ever thought of any of these Monsters for God's Prophets or the true *Messias*? Did ever any Friends of these Pseudo-Apostles prophecy as much of them, as the Enemies of Christianity attest of *Jesus Christ*.

Phil. If Christ's Divinity and Commission from God were so evident in their own Records, why did the Jews cast him off and Crucify him? Is it probable God's chosen People should spurn at his Precepts, and shut their Eyes against the bright Sunshine; chuse rather to ramble in the Dark, than follow the Light?

Theop. You are caught in your own Net: Your Objection flashes in your Face, and convinces the Jews, of an unparallel'd Obstinacy. For besides the Manifest Testimony of their own Records as to the Time, the Place of his Birth, Life, Lineage, Death, Passion and Resurrection:

'Twas

'Twas further recorded in their own Annals, *Dan. 9. Malac. c. 1.* that their own Town should be degarnish'd, their Temple demolish'd, and they left without Host, without Altar: And that they themselves should cast him off and Crucify him, which was all discharg'd at their Expence: For after they had murder'd him upon *Mount-Calvary*, their City was taken, their Temple destroy'd, themselves massacred, and the Remains scatter'd about the World like Reprobate Vagabonds, devested at once of their Kingdom, their Country, their God, their All. Had the Jews set up *Jesus Christ* as they had done several Impostors; then the Plea would have been to the Purpose: But now having disown'd him for their *Messias*, it is a most irrefragable Argument in Proof of his Mission, and fortifies all other Reasons in Favour of it. Now for a Deist to wonder a Jew should shut his Eyes to the bright Sunshine, is most

unreasonable, seeing he experiences in his own Person more Obstinacy, than ever the Jews pretended to ; who, tho' most flamingly impious and obdurate for disowning their *Messias*, evinc'd both by their own Records and his admirable Life, Doctrine and Miracles ; yet never arriv'd to that Impudence and Impiety to deny the Existence of such a Person as *Jesus Christ*, his preaching such Doctrine or working such Miracles as are recorded of him. But to reinforce the Proofs of Christianity from the Nature of its Doctrine.

Secondly, Compare the Maxims of Christianity with the most celebrated Legislators of antiquity, the *Solon's*, the *Numa's*, the *Draco's*, the *Licurguses*. You'll find in 'em good Laws to model a Common-Wealth for some temporary End, but far short of the Scheme of our Law-giver *Jesus Christ*. The Subject of his Gospel is so elevated an Argument,

ment, that it surmounts the weak Imagination of a Man that creeps and crawls upon Earth. It must be the Invention and Contrivance of a God, who commands us to love him with our whole Heart, our whole Soul, our whole Strength; and our Neighbour as our self; with such an heroical Disposition of Mind as to render our Life and last Drop of Blood for him. Here you are oblig'd to love those that hate you, and bless those that curse you: You are taught by the Evangelical Counsels such Purity of Body and Mind, as to vie with the very Angels; such Sanctity of Intention in your Actions as without any Allay of Honour, Pleasure or Profit, to steer all your Thoughts, Words and Deeds to God's greater Glory; such profound Humility and Contempt of worldly Grandeur, as to trample upon all Honours and Eminencies, and prefer the Ignominy of the Cross, before Crowns and Kingdoms; such

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diffinterested Poverty, as to sell ones
 whole Subſiſtance to be dealt about
 in Alms, and become a Beggar for
 the Love of God : Such entire Obe-
 dience, as not only to ſacrifice our
 ſelves to God's Honour and our
 Neighbours good, by overt Acts,
 but alſo our Underſtanding and Wills
 to the Laws and Rules of Obedi-
 ence : Thus the whole Man be-
 comes a Holocauſt to his Maker.
 What Point of Perfection ſo refin'd
 in Matter of Morality, Humility,
 Patience, Juſtice, Temperance, Cha-
 ſtity, Charity, which Chriſtianity
 does not both preach and praſtiſe
 in ſeveral of her Members, whoſe
 ſhining Examples, ſingular Vertues
 and Miracles juridically ſifted and
 examined are enrol'd in publick Re-
 giſters ? What Myſtery is ſo ſublime
 that our Minds are not mounted
 up to, to contemplate ? All the Ora-
 tors in the Univerſe with their Rhe-
 torick, or Philoſophers with their
 Reaſons could never induce a Man to
 be-

believe such incomprehensible Mysteries as the Resurrection of the Dead, the Incarnation, the Trinity. Who could ever have imagin'd with the Assistance of their own earthly Ideas alone, that a human Carcass corrupted and turn'd to Dust, nay embody'd in the Bellies of wild Beasts, should arise more vigorous, more bright, more beautiful than ever? That an Immense, Immutable, Immortal God should cloth the Rayes of his Divinity with the Nature of a poor Worm, his Vassal Man; and by his Wisdom, Power and Goodness, concenter these two Extreams in his own Person, Omnipotency and Impotency, Immortality and Mortality, Immensity and a Span, God and Man? How could it enter into the Intellect of an Angel, much less that of a weak ignorant Man, to believe his God to be *One* in Essence, Power, Goodness, Wisdom and Justice; yet *Three* in Persons, truly and really distinct? What sub-

sublunary Objects are there here on Earth, to convey into our Mind such Ideas by our Senses, there being nothing extant in created Nature able to suggest a Notion of this Mystery, as it is in the Creed of the Christians? Nor can the Deist argue from any pretended Unreasonableness of the Mysteries, without demonstrating them to be divine by the very Argument by which he opposes them: Seeing evident Reason and Experience convinces us, that Nothing but a God could effect such a Change in a heady, sensual, selfish World, to make Mysteries repugnant to Flesh and Blood both in Theory and Practice, obtain and oblige Men to submit to their Authority.

Thirdly, Consider the Persons, that preach'd up this sublime Doctrine both in Morality an Mystery, not powerful Princes, subtil Philosophers or quaint Orators: But twelve weak, ignorant, illiterate Fishermen, without Arms, without Interest

terest, without Eloquence. Where did they preach it? Not in Corners, Caves or private Houses, but in publick Tribunals, and open Courts, in the Face of subtil Philosophers, bloody Tyrants, and raging Devils. To demonstrate their Doctrine without Dispute Divine, 'twas back'd with God's broad Seal, Miracles, wrought in View of their bitterest Enemies; where they surmounted Power by Patience, Eloquence with Ignorance, and the Subtility of Men and Devils with Sanctity. *Jesus Christ* their Lord an Master sent them not as Wolves among Sheep, but Sheep amongst Wolves, *Ecce ego mitto vos sicut Agnos inter Lupos*. For Wolves to worrie and master Sheep is natural, but for mild innocent Lambs to tame Wolves and turn them into Sheep, as the Apostles did their Persecutors, is most miraculous. When *Cyrus* went to conquer the World; he decoy'd his Souldiers into an Association with a
natu-

natural Motive, the Prospect of a Temporary Reward: If he be a Footman *said he*, I'll mount him: If a Yeoman I'll make him a Gentleman: If a Master of a Village, I'll give him a City: If a Lord, I'll make him a Prince. But *Jesus Christ* and his twelve Apostles without the *Posse* of Arms or fair Promises, conquered more Kingdoms, erected more Trophies, subdued more Hearts by Preaching, than ever *Cyrus* or any Monarch in the World, with all Blandiments, Power or Promises. If the Apostles were aspiring Men, what strange Methods did they make use off to compass their Designs? Did not they use Arguments repugnant to Flesh and Blood? In lieu of Honours and Delights they promis'd nothing but Goals, Gibbets, Pains and Persecutions: Yet notwithstanding all Opposition from Tyrants; Frowns from Enemies, and Flatteries from Friends, nay all the Torments human Malice could invent,

or

or Power inflict; Christianity got Root, grew up, and branch'd itself over the Universe by the Piety and Patience of twelve illiterate Men. This none can rationally deny, being a publick Matter of Fact, known to the whole World: For neither Turk, Jew nor Infidel durst dispute the Manner of its Propagation, that was acquainted with its Origine. In a Word, either Christianity was usher'd into the World by Miracles, the Product of Omnipotency, or without them: If the first, is not the Deist a most incredulous daring Man to deny a Doctrine implanted by divine Power? If the latter, is it not still more miraculous for a Doctrine so difficult both in Theory and Practice, preached by weak, indigent, ignorant Men, to grapple with, and be too hard for all Wit, Power and Plenty of the whole World? And which is more surprizing, that these Beggars should oblige, proud, avaritious, sottish, sensual

fual Men to run counter to their natural Bent and Strain of their Inclinations, and induce them to prefer Poverty before Plenty, Ignominy before Honours, and Sufferings before Satisfaction : These supernatural Effects surpass the Miracles themselves that were wrought in Ratification of the Doctrine.

Phil. Tho' the Apostles did not allure their Profelytes with temporary Rewards, nor terrify them with Torments ; Yet you cannot deny, but they decoy'd them to their Party with the Prospect of eternal Rewards, and terrify'd them with the Fears of eternal Torments, which Infinitely surpass'd the Promises and Punishments of this World. What Wonder that Men influenc'd by these Reasons should for self Preservation, provide for Futurity ? What's more usual than for more powerful Motives to have an Ascendant over us ? What can be a more prevalent Motive with Rational Men than

than the Prospect of a never fading Happiness and, Horrour of everlasting Torments.

Theop. Is it not a most stupendious Thing, that these Mōtives of Futurity, should have such an Ascendant over all Mankind but the Deists, that pretend to be the Top of the Species, the most Rational, I mean, to have the most of a Man in 'em? The Reply I must confess is subtly contriv'd, but attended with the Fate of all other false Reasonings; it enfeebls the Plea of a Deist, and fortifies the Faith of Christianity; For if the Apostles were such Men, had the Spring of Peoples Thoughts, to set them upon Penance, Selfdenial, Mortification, to love Enemies, confess their most secret and shameful Sins, thirst after Crosses, Gallows, Gibbets; to make them believe so many difficult Mysteries repugnant to Flesh and Blood; and all this not out of a temporary End, but a spiritual Motive, the Hopes of Heaven, and

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the Horrour of Hell; then we may conclude these Preachers were no Proud, Avaricious Cheats, dissembling lying Knaves, broaching their Errors for a temporary Interest; but Good, Honest, Vertuous, upright Dealers, disengag'd from the World. The Deist then cannot in Reason suppose them to be a Club of Impostors, Magicians, Sorcerers, that play Tricks to pick up Money and Credit in the World: What they taught was Orthodox, and their Wonders not Magick but true Miracles; else they would have been the greatest Fools in the World, to expose their Persons to all Manner of Hardships, without Prospect of Honour, Pleasure or Profit here; and for their Lying, Cheating, Dissembling, be damn'd eternally hereafter, according to their own Doctrine: Unless the Deist will make the World's Conversion from Polytheism to Christianity still more miraculous, by supposing a Set of Fools, Knaves, and Beg-

Beggars too hard for all the Wisdom, Power and Piety in the World, and in spite of all Opposition, without Arms, Wit, or Interest to raise their Follies and Forgeries upon the Ruines of Sense, Reason and Religion. When the Apostles preached Christianity to Pagans, their Inducements to believe their Doctrine with its Rewards and Punishments, the joynt Objects of their Faith, were either more cogent and better than the Motives of any other Sect, or worse : If the first, then the World acted prudently in a Matter of the last Importance, their eternal Woe or Welfare, by embracing a Belief that was supported with stronger Arguments, than any other Sect : If the latter, the Deist multiplies Miracles, obliging us to believe this Miracle of Miracles, *viz.* That Personages of all Ages, Sexes, Characters and Callings were prevail'd with to relinquish their Dignities, Pleasures and Possessions, to run after Crosses and

Contradictions, to espouse a Doctrine repugnant to their natural Bent and Inclination, with less Reason, and fewer Motives than they had to follow 'em.

Chri. I own, *Theopistus*, you have fully answer'd the Deists *Quere*, why a Man should be a Christian, rather than a Deist, Jew, Heathen, or Mahometan, producing such evident Arguments and distinguishing Tokens of Truth, from the Nature of its Doctrine, Preachers and Propagation, that a Rational Creature is bound to subscribe, having the most cogent Proofs for its Credibility of all Sects and Religions in the World. Tho' you have said enough, *Theopistus*, to satisfy any reasonable Man; yet in my Opinion, you have not sufficiently illustrated the Subject of Christian Miracles. I have heard many a Deist say, were they ascertain'd, that these Miracles of casting out Devils, curing all Diseases, raising dead Men to Life, confuting
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and confounding the lying Wonders of Sorcerers and Magicians, were true and incontestable, they would be inclin'd to receive the Doctrine; but seeing there are so many legendary Fables, trump'd upon 'em by Historians, it raises a Doubt of every Matter of Fact handed down by Antiquity.

Theop. Having already demonstrated the Existency of such Persons as *Jesus Christ* and his twelve Apostles, who taught and establish'd such a Doctrine, wrought such Miracles in Ratification of it, being Matters, of Fact, not transacted in Caves or Corners, or publish'd by private Persons, but recorded in publick Registers in the View of the whole World, with all their appendant Circumstances of Time, Place, Persons, &c. Its needless to repeat them here. These Truths of our Saviour's curing all Manner of Ailments, Feeding 5000 Persons with five Loaves and two Fishes, Raising dead Men to

Life, are as evident, being done before Clouds of Witnesses, as it is, that there was such a Man as *Julius Caesar*, that warr'd against his Country, was stabb'd in the Roman Senate; that *William the Conqueror* invaded these Kingdoms, and *Charles the I.* lost his Head; none disputing the Truth of these Matters of Fact, neither Turk nor Jew, no, nor *Lucian*, *Porphiry*, or *Julian the Apostate*, professed Enemies of Christianity; tho' some were so impious, out of Envy and Malice to impute them to Art Magick. Besides, these Miraculous Effects were not recorded, by tricking, designing Men to cajole a Party, but of such known Probity and simplicity as to enregister their own Failings, how that *Peter* tho' the Prince of the Apostles deny'd his own Master, that *Saul Dr.* of the *Gentils*, was a Murderer in consenting to *Stephen's* Death, that the very Apostles had Differences amongst themselves, &c. Again, these poor, igno-

ignorant, humble Men do not recount visionary Dreams, done in *Hugger-mugger* without Witnesses, as *Mahomet* the Impostor, but publick Transactions, with an Appeal to the Senses and Experience of an innumerable Audience, and Enemies too, who scann'd and canvass'd 'em with utmost Rigour, and would have been sure to oppose whatever was ill grounded or erroneus: Yet these *Factum's*, I mean *Christ's* Miracles and his Apostles, were so well attested, that none durst dispute 'em, no, not the worst of Apostates, who own'd the Facts, but some indeed gave the Deference to the Devil, and not to divine Power: So that unless we allow these Miracles of *Jesus Christ*, and his Apostles to be evident Matters of Fact there's no such Thing in the World; which Assertion cuts upon all common Sense, and strikes us out of the List of Rationals.

Phil. Theopistus you run on at a great Rate, without any Distinction between Points of small Importance, as whether there was such a Man as *Julius Caesar*, *William the Conqueror*, &c. and Matters of Religion, when its the Interest of the Priests that have such an Ascendant over the State, to mint gainful Matters of Fact, to bubble the Magistracy, and clap the Laity under the Hatches, to be ridden by them for their own Ends, For Religion is a specious Pretence to cajole the People and make the Ministry considerable in the Eye of the Audience.

Theop. What a Misfortune is it to have an ill Cause to manage; one cannot arraign their Adversary without impleading themselves, You pretend the historical Relation of *Julius Caesar*, of *William the Conqueror*, are Matters of small Importance, so none would trouble their Heads to forge 'em. Yet as inconsiderable as they appear, I defy a Deist to palm such
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Records upon any one Nation in the World for Truths; mostly when attended with all their Appurtenances of Time, Place, Persons, Actions, and seconded with the total Subversion of a Government. If then these Things of lesser Consequence cannot be sham'd upon one Country or Kingdom, how can a Deist imagine Matters of Fact guarded with all their collateral Circumstances, [such as are the Miracles of *Christ* and his Apostles transacted in View of the whole World, to ratify Points of Religion of the last Importance, whereon depends the eternal Woe or Welfare of all Mankind] should be trump'd upon the World, each Person tamely submitting to their Authority, tho' never so seemingly repugnant to Flesh and Blood, Sense and Reason too? Good God, what a Miracle is this? Either these Priests that deluded the World into a Belief of Christian Miracles and Mysteries were Fools or wise Men?

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If the first, is it not a Paradox, that all the Wisdom in the World should be gull'd in Points of the last Importance by a Set of Fools? If the latter, is it not more surprising, that wise Men, without the Prospect of Happiness, either here or hereafter, should forge these publick Eyes, with an open Appeal to every Man's Sense and Experience to the contrary, to be laugh'd at for Lyers in recounting these sham Miracles with all their additional Circumstances which every one could contradict, without a Possibility of being believed? Nay which is still a most monstrous Paradox, Turks, Jews and Heathens should combine with Christians their Enemies, to prophecy, scribe and lie to prop up the Imposture? Ascertaining us that there was such a Man as *Jesus Christ*, if I may call him a *Man*, a *Worker of most wonderful Miracles*: That he wrought them by the *Power and Spirit of God*. Jos. l. 18. Antiq. What likelihood is there, that ancient and

modern Writers, Enemies to Christianity, should forge Flams to support their Doctrine?

As to the *Factum's* fabled of the Heathen Gods, they were neither publickly known, nor seriously attested by any one: No, nor sign'd or seal'd as Christian Doctrine and Miracles with the Blood of innumerable Martyrs; Nor do these Godsmiths ascertain us of any known publick Miracles wrought in Ratification of their Superstitious Doctrines, but only father'd upon their Pagods a Pack of private inchoherent Dreams, the Soberer laugh'd at, and the more Powerful forc'd upon the People for politick Ends, with Fire and Sword, as *Mahomet's* Converse with the Moon, and mighty Journey from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*; or the Poet's Fictions of the pagan Deities, as *Mercury's* stealing Sheep, *Jupiter's* being turn'd into a Bull, and such Romantick Stuff, without any other Proof than the Poet's Brain:

Brain: Who ever resuscitated the Dead to live and converse with Men, cur'd Persons that were born blind, and all other incurable Distempers in View of the whole World; believed 'em themselves, or oblig'd others to seal their Forgeries with their Heart's Blood? 'Tis true, the Pagans, as well as the Turks, have their *Ramazans*, Observances, Rites and Rituals, and tell you strange Stories of their Oracles. What? And are not their Soberer and more sensible Men of their Gang ashamed of them? *Pliny lib. 30. c. 1.* and *Zozimus* a malicious Infidel in *Julian the Apostate's* Life demonstrates the Vanity of their Idols and Oracles, mostly at *Christ's* Appearance, as *Porphyry* an Infidel and a profess'd Enemy of Christianity attests from *Apollo's* own Complaint *Hei mihi Oraculorum defecit mihi claritas.* *Plutarch* one of the learnedst of the same Profession, in *tract. de perfectione Oraculorum*, owns their Deficiency in plain

plain Terms : Infine, *Porphry, lib. 1. con. Chris.* recounting a great Plague that rag'd in *Sicily*, says of *Missina* the Metropolis ; *It's no Wonder if this City be plagu'd so long, seeing both Esculapius and all the Gods left it by the Access of the Christians, for since that Men begun to worship Jesus, we could never obtain any Profit by our Gods.* This being own'd by the Enemies of Christianity, viz. the Power of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, and the Vanity and Impotency of their own Idols and Oracles ; will any Man be so senselessly impious to parallel Paganism with Christianity, when it is manifest, the first is nothing but Fiction and Phrensy ; and the latter, Reality, Wisdom and Piety ? In case the shameless Deist will lay the Stress upon Pagan Priests, the superstitious Ceremonies spawn'd and polish'd by them : First, Let them give in as clear Evidence of their Credentials and Commission from God. Secondly,

ly, Let them demonstrate their Doctrine in Mystery and Morality as divine as ours. Thirdly, That its Promulgation was as miraculous as *Jesus Christ's*. Fourthly, That their own Phrensy in disbelieving reveal'd Religion, be mark'd out with as many Motives and Miracles as Christianity. Then I'll close With Deism, and allow, that Set of *Cynicks* talks rationally; else for a Deist to parallel Polytheism or Turcism with Christianity, is outfacing all Sense and Reason.

Phil. Let us suppose *Jesus Christ's* Miracles, and these of his Apostles were really transacted as recorded; what then? Was not *Apollonius Tyaneus* that danc'd Statues about like Poppets, as wonderful for his Signes as they? What strange Prodigies does *Philostratus* and *Meragenes* report of him? Yet none canonize him for a true Prophet, but an Impostor, &c.

Theo.

Theop. Could any Thing be more weakly urg'd, than *Apollonius's* Feats? To turn Infidel, to deny Christianity for such incredible Stories recounted by *Philostratus*! Let not the Deist question a Christian's Credulity, seeing he over-reaches them a Bar Length. A Christian believes the Doctrine and Miracles of *Jesus Christ*, on such Grounds only, as no prudent Man can deny, being reinforc'd with all the Authority and Reason that may justly be requir'd for any publick Transaction done in View of the whole World; besides innumerable Arguments from his Enemies Records, the Nature of its Teachers, and the Doctrine taught, both being demonstrated Divine; the Impossibility of its being introduc'd, &c. But a Deist that pretends to take nothing upon such Authority, builds his blasphemous Apostacy upon *Philostratus's* Word, who, as he tells you, to gratify *Julia* a Rhetorical Lady much addicted to Romances,

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recounts strange things of this Magician, but will not ascertain us, that his Relation is true. What he reports is from *Danus*, varnish'd and trump'd up by him, a 100 Years after these wonderful Performances are said to be done. He cites indeed one *Meragenes*' but values not his Authority, taxing him with Ignorance of *Apollonius*'s Feats, for not being fitted to the Palate of a Romantick Lady. But to gratify my Antagonist; let's suppose there was such a Man as *Apollonius*. What then? What was the End or Design of his Performances? He set up no new Worship, nor abolish'd the old; pretended to no new Gospel or Revelation; left no Law behind; establish'd nothing, contradicted no Body; oblig'd none to believe him. Whence it is evident he either wrought no such Wonders as are fabl'd of him, or else, if he did, he play'd these Pranks to get Smoak, and so vanish'd away in his own Con-

Concept. But what are these few, dark, romantick Testimonies, clashing with each other, to our Saviour's and his Apostle's Miracles, recorded in publick Registers, attested by Clouds of uncontestable Witnesses, own'd by Turk, Jew and Gentile, Enemies to Christianity, sign'd and seal'd with the Blood of Martyrs, wrought in Confirmation of a Law and Gospel, practis'd, taught and establish'd by their Virtue all over the World? The Deist must own *Apollonius's* Wonders to be either in Favour of Truth, or Falshood, else why are they alledg'd? If the first, let them not blame the Credulity of a Christian, seeing they give Credit to Signes infinitely less credible: If the latter, that is if they imagine them to be wrought to countenance Error and Falshood, what an unparallel'd Piece of Impudence is it in them, to impugne evident Matters of Fact, divine Truths, with Shams and Falsities, which they be-

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lieve to be truly and really such.

Phil. Tho' we should allow your Miracles to be true Matters of Fact, still you cannot convince them to be true Miracles. Might not *Beelzebub* be their Abettor to delude the World with greater Subtilty. Pray who knows the Extent of his Power, or the Force of Nature?

Theop. Grant but such a Power in *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, to work the Miracles recorded in Scripture which cannot as I have demonstrated, reasonably be deny'd, *viz.* Of curing such as are born blind, and all Manner of Ailements, raising both Himself and dead Men to Life, a Power and Authority to dislodge the Devil out of Demoniacks, and to dissolve his Works, as both Heathen and Christian attest, and Devils dare not deny, as I have already evinc'd by their own Authors and Oracles; grant but this, and a Deist is the most unreasonable Man in the World, to persist in his Incredulity. In case
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we had been *Jesus Christ's* Contemporaries, Eye Witnesses of these miraculous Effects, in Proof of Christianity and Condemnation of Deism, would not this have been a cogent Argument, a pregnant Proof with any rational Man, to believe in *Jesus Christ*? Mostly if these Signs and Wonders had such an Ascendant over lying Wonders, to oblige the Devil himself with his Magicians, to confess themselves master'd by the Power of *Jesus Christ*, the only true God? Were two in Dispute about Religion, a Christian and a Deist, and should the latter own himself to be worsted and obliged to subscribe to the Evidence of his Adversary's Arguments; Could a By-stander in Reason take on with the conquer'd, and not the Conqueror? God and the Devil were in Dispute at the first Planting of Christianity; *St. Peter*, and *St. Paul*, Apostles of *Jesus Christ* were God's Champions, *Simon Magus*, and *Ely-*

mas the Devils; they controverted the Mysteries of our Faith, not only with Arguments, but unusual Signs and Wonders: The holy Apostles by divine Power, as 'twas own'd by their very Enemies, conquer'd and confounded the Sorcerers, with the Energy of their Arguments and Authority of their Miracles, and forc'd them to publish *Christ's* Divinity, Doctrine and Power to be Paramount to that of the Devil, as is manifest both by publick Registers and the World's Conversion: *Simon Magus* coveting to purchase *St. Peter's* Power with Money, and *Elymas* loosing his Eyes by *St. Paul's* Preaching, in Punishment of his wicked Errors and spiritual Blindness. Besides the greatest Miracle of all, the suddain Change of a headdy, sensual, selfish World, wedded to its own Ways and Humours, into an humble, pious, patient, chaste, charitable Set of Men. The Devil's Emissaries convicted by the manifest Force of *Christ's* Mer-

Mercy, Power and Authority over them, own'd the Truth of his Doctrine and Divinity, as *Tertullian*, a most learned Writer, proves to the Heathens Face in his *Apology ad Gentes*, demonstrating in several Examples, how the Devil was forc'd to own himself a Devil in his Idols and Oracles, and not a God. *How they fear God in Christ, and Christ in God, and that they are made subjects unto him.* None will lie to their own Shame, but rather for Honour and Advantage. Yet these Spirits, more bashful than a Deist, will not say Christ was a Conjuror, but they'll confess he was the Vertue, Wisdom and Word of God, &c. Is not then a Deist more daring than a Devil to deny Christ's Miracles, Doctrine and Divinity, these wicked Spirits are oblig'd to own? And are not they more foolish than the weakest and worst of Men, to submit to the Captive, rather than the Conqueror? As to that Branch of the Objection; *Beelzebub's* being an

Abettor to *Christ's* Miracles, to delude the World with greater Subtilty, is a Thread so finely spun, that it breaks as you touch it. For tho' the Devil be a Knave, he was never taken for a Fool before, to desolate his own Dominions, to work Miracles, to countenance Vertue and discourage Vice. As for our Ignorance of the Extent of Nature, what Boundaries are to be fix'd to God's Power and the Devils, the Objection flat and frivolous, as long as we are ascertain'd of the Piety and Prevalency of the one, and the Impiety and Impotency of the other, from undoubted Records and the manifest Conversion of the World; and that Miracles of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles got the Mastery of all magical Arts and Legerdemain Tricks of the Devil. If then the Curing all Manner of incurable Ailments, raising both himself and dead Men to Life, vanquishing Devils, dispensing with all the Laws of Nature and

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Implanting his holy and heavenly Doctrine repugnant to Flesh and Blood, by indigent, illiterate, impotent Fishermen, in spite of all the Power, Subtilty, Interest, Eloquence and Malice of Men and Devils, be not a sufficient Motive to make a Deist believe, it seems almost out of the Power of an Omnipotent God to convert him; much less ought weak ignorant Man pretend to it.

Phil. You fancy *Theopistus*, you have knock'd down all the Deists at a Blow: You rant it out at a strange Rate, as if the Cause were your own without Controul: I hope *Chrisis* will be so just, as not to condemn me before she has a perfect Cognizance of my Cause.

Chri. By no Means, I have given you a favourable Audience hitherto, nor shall my Patience relent to hear out: What have you material to offer to the Plantif's Proofs.

Phil. My Adversary has labour'd much to prove Christian Miracles

to be wrought by divine Power in Ratification of divine Doctrine, but has not demonstrated what this Christian Doctrine is. The Arian, Nestorian, Protestant and Papist own *Jesus Christ's* Doctrine and Miracles to be true, but are not agreed amongst themselves, what these Principle Points of Christian Doctrine are. I am sure their Creed and Catechisms are not a Kin, but very Heterogeneal in their Articles. Not one of the contending Parties will budge, but bandy about their Opinions in the Pulpit, stigmatizing each other with the odious Imputation of Apostate, Scismatick, and Heretick. How shall we fish out the Christian Doctrine amidst such Confusion? Pray how'll you demonstrate that these principle Mysteries *viz.* the Incarnation, Trinity, &c. so much talk'd of, are Points of Christian Doctrine?

Theop. There's Nothing *Philautus*, which argues more the Weakness of your Cause, than your Manner of
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Proceeding in our present Debate ; you have been forc'd to quit your Posts one by one , and still you would cast your self behind some new Entrenchment ; but this is a weak Shift, a meer Evasion, which evinces you have no Mind to be undeceiv'd or to acknowledge your Errors : If I have prov'd to Evidence, that the Grounds of Atheism are not tenable, that Christianity is stamp'd with the Character of Truth, which makes it evidently more credible than any other Sect which stands in Opposition with it ; If I say this be prov'd, as you seem to grant, why do you not humbly acknowledge your Errors ? Why do you not by a Submission of your Judgment atone for that unwarrantable Liberty you have hitherto taken, of ruling your Faith by your capricious Fancy ? Being drive from other Holds, you would now perswade your self, that the Multiplicity of Sects even among Christians is a sufficient

ficient Plea for one of your Perswasion to discredit All; that is, for Fear your senseless Soul, buried in Sensuality should be disturb'd, you are willing to catch at every Thing which may serve to lull you asleep: But Sir, if you desire sincerely to awake out of this Lethargy, it will not be much harder, even by the Light of Reason, to convince your self of the principle Tenets of *Christ's* true Doctrine, in Opposition to the Errors of the Arians, Nestorians and other Heretical Sects, then it was to prove the Truth of Christianity, in Opposition to the Turks and Heathens.

Phil. What *Theopistus*, do you pretend to demonstrate the Mysteries of *Christ's* true Doctrine by the Light of Reason?

Theo. Mistake me not, you miscalculate very much, if you fancy I pretend to demonstrate Christian Mysteries by Reason; that's more than I promis'd, or any one needs to perform. Your last Plea for your
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Incredulity was taken from the Multiplicity of Sects among Christians; by which you pretend, that tho' Christian Religion be true, the Deist has no Obligation of embracing it, as long as Christians differ among themselves in the Articles of their Creed: In answer to which, if I can shew, that the Mysteries of the Trinity, Incarnation, &c. are Points of Christian Doctrine, I shall at the same Time exclude from the true Faith, the Arians, Nestorians, &c. who oppose these Truths; and by Consequence lay down a Rule by which you may convince your self of the chief Tenets of *Christ's* true Faith: But, remember Sir, I have already prov'd that the Christian is the only true Religion, and that our present Task is only to find out the Mysteries which belong unto it; and whereas this is no Ways necessary for the Conviction of a Deist, but only requisite to take away those Prejudices which might otherwise hin-

hinder him from opening his Eyes to the known Truth; I shall content my self with barely proposing my Mind, in two or three Instances against the Arians, and Nestorians, leaving the further Application to your self, according to the Necessity you may have of convincing your self, concerning other Parts.

Chri. Theopistus, You know Authority here takes no Place, *Philautus's* Standard is Reason alone.

Theop. It's true the most pregnant Proofs for the Truth of Christian Doctrine, and the most certain Rule to distinguish the true Doctrine of *Christ* from other Sectaries, has been in all Ages drawn from Antiquity, and from the joynt Consent of the most authentick Records of Church and State, from the unanimous Agreement of the visible Part of the Church, from the remaining Monuments, Feasts and Fasts observ'd in Memory of these Mysteries as now believed in the true Church of *Christ*;
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and I might with Reason urge all these to prove against the Arians and Nestorians that the Misery of the Trinity and Incarnation are Points of the true Christian believe, and the same may be said of other Points, in as much as they are opposite to other Sects; but I am willing to weave this at present, and only to argue as I have already done, from the Light of Reason.

Phil. Come *Theopistus*, commence your Proof.

Theop. No Sectary can reasonably deny that the Mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation are Christian Tenets, belonging to the true Faith of *Christ* (the same Sir, may be said of all the chief Points of the true Faith) Nay all must grant that they are Points of Religion deliver'd unto us by *Christ* himself, and by Consequence, he being the true *Messias* and true God, these are Parts of that saving Faith, which he came to plant in the World. I prove my Assertion, because
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they must either have been deliver'd by *Christ*, or else they must have been introduc'd, and have crept into the Christian Creed since *Christ's* Time; I need not go about to prove, that these Mysteries and in particular those which depend of his Incarnation, were not taught and preach'd before his Coming: But no Man can reasonably pretend that they have been forg'd and introduc'd in after Ages; for, is it credible that these Mysteries so repugnant to Sense and Reason, as the Deists pretend, should possibly be usher'd into all Parts of the World with Success, and that none should know when they took Date, by whom, where how, and by what Means these monstrous Tenets were broach'd and brought to Perfection? Never was there heard of a Novelty spawn'd at any Time, in any Part of the World, tho' in Favour of Flesh and Blood, and suitable to human Sentiments, but presently the Authors and Abettors were

were discover'd, Head made against it, and Methods concerted to suppress it: Therefore that these Mysteries above mention'd, so cross upon Sense, so shocking to human Reason, should be preach'd promulg'd and obtain all over the World; each Person tamely submitting their Sense and Reason without Controul to their Authority, tho' Men of such desperate Ends, Interests and Designs, is a miraculous Effect that surpasses all other Christian Miracles. Other Points of Christianity, less difficult both in Theory and in Practice, could not be introduc'd without alarming the whole World; innumerable Histories and Records recounting their Authors, Preachers and Persecutors. Yet that the Trinity, Incarnation, tougher Difficulties, knot-tier Points, and more repugnant to Flesh and Blood than the reverse Doctrine, should obtain and prevail without Author, Opposition or Writer, and that all People in all Corners

ners of the World, even the *Grecians* emulous of the western Church, picking Quarrels with her on all Occasions, should conspire with their Enemies to go against the Stream of their own Inclinations, to delude themselves, is another Prodigy no less admirable than the former. When these unparallel'd Pieces of Bigottry (as the Deist terms these sacred Mysteries) were father'd upon the World, either Men were pious or impious? It's impossible to stand Neuters in the Matter of Religion? If the first, is it not a most incredible Thing to imagine good, zealous, vertuous Men would suffer Forgery to ride Paramount over Truth without Opposition; if the latter, is it not a most stupendious Piece of Folly and Phrensy to fancy a Club of Men wedded to their own Ways, and Slaves to Sensuality, should submit their Senses and Reason to Things so contrary to their Inclination? Or is it probable, all
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the Pastors, Prelates and Historians were all fallen asleep in all Corners of the World at once, and had quite forgot the ancient Doctrine, when they rose out of their lethargick Dream? This I must confess is a Miracle, not a jot inferior to the last. Add, that no Error or Superstition was ever usher'd in, but some worldly End or Interest was intended, and apposite Means besetted to compass this Design. Now, tell me, would a Man in his Wits go about to gain Profelytes to his Party, by such Stratagems as these, to bubble them into a Belief, that their God hitherto believ'd as One in Essence, was now to be held, Three in Persons; that Omnipotency and Impotency, Immensity and a Span, Immutability and Mutability, God and Man were both co-united in a Divine Person, without any Change in the Deity: How would these Mysteries have relish'd? Pray tell me, would they have been a pro-

per Method to decoy the World, season'd, as it is suppos'd, for so many Centuries before, with opposite Maxims? Would not such shocking Sentiments put them all into a Ferment, for palming upon them such unheard of Principles? We know it is not the *Genius* of Hereticks to make Mysteries, but to take them away, to level the Road to Libertinism, and raise themselves on the Ruines of Religion. Now, to use opposite Arguments to Man's natural Bent, to allure him to lay aside his Senses and Reason, to quit temporary Ends and Interests, and that all these Contrivances should obtain all over the World, without Opposition or Knowledge of the Author that hatch'd them, where, and by what Means they spread over the Face of the Universe, is a Paradox not to be parallel'd. When the Tares of Heresies and Immoralities, grew up in all Ages, tho' never so inconsiderable in themselves, there

there were allways extant great Numbers of zealous Prelates, Pastors and Labourers in the Harveſt to detect them; but that, when theſe topping Myſteries of the Trinity, Incarnation, &c. were broached, all the Paſtors ſhould be aſleep in all Parts of the World at the ſame Time, for ſeveral Centuries, and that all the good Corn ſowed by *Jeſus Chriſt* and his Apoſtles, ſhould be choak'd up with Cockle; and that, when they were rous'd out of this univerſal Lethargy, all the Husbandmen and Reapers ſhou'd loſe their Senſes, and forget the Doctrine of their Forefathers, and take Weeds for good Corn, is another Prodigy which falls nothing ſhort of the former. 'Tis true, there has been ſome Impugners of theſe Myſteries, but none in his Wits will pretend their Oppoſition gave Birth to Chriſtianity; for a Doctrine muſt be preſum'd firſt to have a Being, before it be impugn'd, unleſs we'll

make the Deists Authors of Christianity, and its Impugners to be its Preachers. These are such Riddles, I defy the subtlest Deist to unravel; and muster them all together, they make these Mysteries above Measure credible, and impossible for a Man of Common Sense, that understands the Nature of Men and Things to break through these Difficulties without exposing his Judgment to the Censure of all Mankind. In a Word, the tougher the Objections are, that are started by a Deist, against these Mysteries, the more miraculous they make their Propagation. For those very Difficulties, which might enfeeble an Assertion in an other Subject, reinforces this: For the more incomprehensible you endeavour to make them, the more impracticable you render their Propagation by human Means. So, *Philautus*, you convince the World of your Errors by your own Arguments. The best
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Advice I can give you, is to supersede the Question, and not to personate *Chriſis* to condemn your self.

Chri. Theopistus, I think your Advice is very seasonable.

Phil. Pray Madam hear me out: I have something here more considerable than what's already advanc'd concerning the Mysteries of Christianity. Altho' I should own in Deference to your Judgment, that Christianism has the Advantage over other Sects, and that the Mysteries above mention'd, are Part of Christian Doctrine: What's that to the Purpose, if the Mysteries themselves overturn the Motives? If we must renounce our Senses and Reason, what will the Motives avail that are bottom'd upon both? For Instance, the Mystery of the Trinity chops upon Reason, and some others upon both Sense and Reason: How then can a Man be influenc'd by Objects from Sense and Reason to believe Mysteries that

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clashes with the Motives drawn from thence. We Deists value ourselves more upon this Objection than any other, it unhinges the whole System of Christianity at once, implies a manifest Repugnancy in the Arguments, and makes its Mysteries disprove its Motives.

Chri. Your Objection, *Philautus*, looks big upon your Adversary, and obliges me to suspend my Award, being desirous to manage this Debate with all imaginable Fairness. *Theopistus*, what have you to offer: Your Antagonist has made a brisk Attack with a fresh Reinforcement from Reason, against you; I must own, several of my Acquaintance have been puzzl'd with this Position, *viz.* How a Man can be induc'd by Arguments from Sense and Reason, repugnant to both: If you can discharge this topping Objection and defeat your Adversary with his own Weapon, Reason, you will gain the Cause, else never pretend to it.

Theop.

Theop. This Difficulty I own is very deluding, as most Deistical Arguments are, but obvious to answer: First, he supposes without Proof, that the Mysteries of Christianity are repugnant to our Senses and Reason, which is absolutely deny'd: For neither does any Mystery cut upon Sense, nor the Trinity upon Reason; not the first, because our Senses are no more deceived in the Objects of which they are to judge, in the Mysteries of our Faith, than in others belonging to human Society: You mistake, if you think our Senses are to be taken as Judges in Matters of Faith; they only judge of the outward Appearance of what's objected; now no Mystery of Christianity obliges me to believe, that these outward Appearances, which fall under my Senses, are not these outward Appearances, and by Consequence, no Mystery cuts upon Sense.

Nor is the Trinity repugnant to

Reason, because it implies no Contradiction in it self. For tho' the Essence of the Father be one and the same Essence of the Son and Holy Ghost; yet where's the Repugnancy for the Essence to be the same, and the Persons distinct? To be indeed one and the same in all Respects, but different in some, is a palpable Contradiction: But to be one and the same in some Considerations, and not in others, is no Repugnancy at all. 'Tis true it is above our Reason to comprehend the Circuminfession of the Three Divine Persons, but no ways crosses upon Reason. I own it's a Mystery infinitely elevated above the Comprehension of a human Intellect, as all other Mysteries are, else they would be no Mysteries, but not to be deny'd by human Reason. *It being most unreasonable and an over-valuing our selves* (as Mr. Lock a Head Deist observes *lib. 4. c. 10.*) *to reduce all to the narrow Measure of our Capacities, and to conclude all*
Things

Things impossible to be done, whose manner of Being exceeds our Comprehension; this is to make our Comprehension Infinite, or our God Finite. If you cannot comprehend that thinking Thing within you, do not deem it a strange Thing, if you cannot comprehend the Operations of the eternal Mind, who made and governs all Things. By this Discourse of a Master-Deist, you see how unreasonable it is, to disbelieve Mysteries above our Reason, as long as we have sufficient Motives that God has reveal'd the Doctrine we believe, induc'd by most convincing Proofs of Christianity. It being then evident that God has reveal'd these Mysteries, the Mysteries themselves cannot emasculate the Motives we have from Reason to believe them. Nay, Reason farther demonstrates, that God's Authority obliges her in Reason to acquiesce to Revelation above her Reason; Else Reason herself will rise up in Judgment and convict her of Folly for not subscribing

cribing to the Authority of the chiefest Reason. Could we comprehend all that the incomprehensible Understanding of God knows, we should be Gods as well as He.

Grant that our Senses do miscalculate, as you Deists term it, in some particular Mystery as well as our Reason, *i. e.* grant, as it is, that some Mysteries are above the Reach of our weak Reason, and that in others we are to believe Truths which we could never gather from the outward Appearances of what is objected to Sense ; yet still the Objection of the Mysteries overturning the Motives of our Faith bottom'd on the Objects of Sense and Reason, falls to the Ground. What an illogical Sequel is this ? My Senses are deluded in one Particular ; Therefore I must not trust my Senses in any Case, tho' I should see the Son of God work Miracles. 'Tis true, God has given us these natural Faculties of our Senses and
Rea-

Reason to square our Actions by, baring such Exigencies as interfere with divine Authority, that declares our Senses or Reason in an Error; then in Reason we are bound to distrust our Senses and Reason too ; not absolutely in all Occurrences, but only such as we find either by Experience or divine Authority, these Faculties misguide us in. How often do we experience our Senses mistaken, *viz.* The Eye in concluding a streight Stick crook'd in the Water, as well as our Reason, by drawing Inferences from false Premisses ; which we rectify afterwards by our own Senses and our own Reason, without discarding them for miscalculating in some particular Incidents. Why may not we allow our God the same Priviledge to correct our Senses and Reason when in an Error, which we use our selves, without laying them aside, as not to be trusted in any Case? The Sophism consists in arguing from a
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particular Emergency to an universal Practice. I hope a Deist has more Wit than to deny the first Principles and the Use of his Faculties, to fancy he is mistaken in all Things, because he blunders in some: Nor does he resolve never to trust his Eyes, because he is mistaken in the Man he saw. What a weak Way of Reasoning is it for a Deist that sets up for a Man of Sense, to argue thus. My Senses, and my Reason too, miss their Aim in some Things, therefore they are to be believed in Nothing; a Pen-feather'd Logician would never be guilty of such a Botch, to go and prove all Men Blockheads because he is one himself. Had indeed Christians been oblig'd by their Principles to disbelieve their Senses and Reason, in those very Motives that influenc'd them to believe the Mysteries; then the Objection might have had both Sense and Reason in't: But seeing neither God nor his Church lays
any

any such Obligation of believing or disbelieving our Senses or Reason at the same Time, and under the same Consideration ; the Difficulty dwindles to nothing ; for why may not a Man distrust his Senses and Reason in some Occurrences and not in all ? Never was there heard so impertinent an Objection against the Trinity, &c. and none so confidently urg'd.

Phil. Make the best of it, these Christian Mysteries are unconceivable in themselves, and unexplicable to others. Pray what Idea can we have of them from our Senses ? Now to believe we know not what, is a blind Religion indeed, unworthy of rational Nature and the God we serve. How is it possible for a Prophet or an Apostle to whom God is pretended to have reveal'd these Mysteries, to inform their Audience, unless they can suggest Idea's of the Revelation. It is an incontestable Truth, that these inspir'd Teachers cannot furnish them with right Ideas,

dea's of the Myſteries as they are in their Origine, *viz.* the Trinity, Incarnation, Reſurrection, &c. for then Chriſtians would comprehend them, and the Myſteries ceaſe to be Myſteries, contrary to the Suppoſition. Such Revelation can no more be conceiv'd by us, than a Man born blind judge of Colours, or one with five Senſes, of the Object of the ſixth, whereof he has no Idea. Is it not then Madneſs for a rational Man to believe Things he can frame no Judgment of, and of which he can have no Knowledge at all, either from his Teacher or himſelf.

Theop. Tho' we be incapable by the Narrowneſs of our Underſtandings, to conceive all the Myſteries that an incomprehenſible God knows; Yet both he and his Preachers may aſcertain us by Signs and Idea's fitted to our Capacities, that there are ſuch Myſteries, that there is ſuch a Place as Heaven and Hell, ſuch Joys, Rewards or Vertue, and Punishments

nishments for Vice, as neither Eye hath seen, Ear hath heard, or Heart of Man can imagine, tho' we can frame no exact Conception of them, *How, in what Manner they exist, and what they are.* Pray does not the Deist (if he be a Lockist and not a Hobbiſt) believe ſeveral other Myſteries he has no Idea of, beſides theſe myſterious Truths of Reward and Punishment? He neither knows what God is, in what Manner he exiſts, nor how he is of himſelf, Omnipotent, Immenſe and Eternal: He believes that we have an immortal and an immaterial Soul, yet neither he nor we can deſcribe *What it is, How it exiſts, acts or operates in our Bodies.* Suppose we had been born blind, had no Idea or Notion of Colour; yet in Caſe Men of Probity with five Senſes had aſcertain'd us, that there was ſomething extant that ſurpaſſed the Object of our other Senſes; our Reaſon would have oblig'd us to believe them, tho' Colour could not
be

be describ'd to us *what it was*. Why then may not a Man assisted by his Senses and Reason, believe Revelation, tho' he has no Idea of the Mysteries themselves, in what Manner they exist? Unless we'll impiously assert God's Authority to be less than Man's. 'Tis true; we have not Idea's or Notions of the supernatural Mysteries as to the *How they are*; yet we are abundantly furnish'd with Idea's from natural Objects of Sense and Reason to inform us *That they are*. The Deists themselves that pretend to model their Life and Actions solely by the Law of Nature, are oblig'd to believe several Things relating to the State of Futurity, without a distinct Knowledge or Notion of it; why then should they exact more Knowledge of a Christian for the Mysteries he believes, than of themselves for the Mysteries they believe?

Seeing then there are demonstrative Arguments, that God has re-
veal'd

veal'd the Myſteries of Chriſtiani-
 ty from the Motives of Credibility,
 we ought not to boggle at them
 whether we conceive them or no,
*How, or in what Manner they ex-
 iſt*; As Mr. Lock a celebrated Deift
 ſcertainſ us, *lib. 4. c. 16.* There are
 a Sort of Propoſitions which challenge
 the higheſt Degree of our Aſſent
 upon bare Teſtimony 'whether
 'the Things propos'd agree or diſ-
 'agree with common Experience,
 'and the ordinary Courſe of Things
 'or no: The Reaſon whereof is be-
 'cauſe the Teſtimony of ſuch an
 'one, cannot deceive, or be decei-
 'ved; that is, God Himſelf. So that
 when there is Reaſon to believe the
 Myſteries of Chriſtianity, as there
 is all the Reaſon in the World, we
 ſhould be very unreaſonable not
 to believe theſe Truths as Mr. Lock
 attelts, *lib. 4. c. 19. of Ethuſianſm.*
*When Reaſon is ſatisfied, God has re-
 veal'd it, tho' the Revelation cannot be
 made out by natural Principles, that is,*
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by Idea's or Notions which we fetch from natural Objects, *still Reason declares for it.* Its flat and frivolous for *Lockists* to dispute Revelation handed down by God's Prophets and Apostles to Posterity ; because, say they, inspir'd Men cannot transmit to others the Cognizance or Belief of a Mystery their Audience has no Idea of, and with the same Breath maintain that we may have a Knowledge of God, our Souls, the Rewards and Punishments of Futurity, tho' neither we nor they have any Notions in *what Manner they exist, or what they are.* The grand Illusion of these unthinking Rationalists consists, in not distinguishing the Proofs and Motives by which we are induc'd to believe the Mysteries, from the Notions and Idea's of the Mysteries themselves ; the first are proportion'd to our natural Conceptions, and not the latter. A Man may have sufficient Motives and Idea's from secondary Causes, *viz.* Curing all Man-

Manner of incurable Ailments, raising dead Men to Life, and other Miracles done by divine Authority in Proof of some high Mystery, to raise his Understanding to a firm Assent and belief of the said Mystery, tho' at the same Time he has no clear and distinct Notion of the same Mystery as it is in it self; nay, the Deist in this must of Necessity agree with me; he confesses his own Body is actuated by a living, immaterial, Spiritual Soul; now if I ask him how that which is immaterial, is tied and united to a material Substance, in what Manner it influences, actuates and moves the material Organs of his Body; he cannot tell, having no exact Ideas from the Objects of his Senses or Reason, to ascertain him of the Manner of its Operations. Why then does a Deist reprehend those Methods of Credulity in a Christian, he must of Necessity make use of himself?

Phil. There's a vast Disparity in the Creed of a Christian and a Deist, who believes Nothing but upon Evidence of his own Knowledge, built upon his own Senses and Reason, whilst a Christian believes by *Proxy* the Testimony and Authority of others ; so cannot pretend to such certain and unshaken Grounds. Our Creed is a Kind of Original Revelation, decypher'd in our own Breast, and evidenc'd by our own Senses and Reason ; and not a traditional Revelation. The Belief of a God, the Existence and Immortality of the Soul, the Rewards and Punishments of Futurity, which are the Mysteries a Deist submits to, are indeed above the natural Reach of human Reason, but not repugnant thereto ; which gives a Deist a vast Advantage over the Christian.

Theop. Sir, You miscalculate very much if you value your self for believing a God, the Rewards and Punishments of Futurity, the Existence

stence of an immortal and immaterial Soul, acting and operating in a material Body upon the Conviction of Sense, Experience and Reason, seeing a Christian can demonstrate the Existence of a God, &c. as well as you. Our Controversy is not *How* a Deist believes a God, the Rewards and Punishments of the next Life, the immortality and immateriality of the Soul; But why he is an Infidel and disbelieves other christian Mysteries, *viz.* the Trinity, Incarnation, &c. Being supernatural Truths made known to us by the incontestable Records and Authority of others. And such evident Matters of Fact, that a Person must unman himself to dispute the Doctrine? I own a Deist acts Rationally and applaud him for believing his own Eyes and Reason, that demonstrate from the Effects the Existency of a first Cause, an Immense, Omnipotent, Immortal and Eternal God, whose Existence he

neither conceives *How it is*, or *What it is*, being infinitely mounted above human Imagination: But I blame him for disbelieving his Ears and his own Reason, that recommends unto him the Credence of the Incarnation, Trinity, &c. which he also cannot conceive; seeing the Motives of these Christian Mysteries are so Rational, no prudent Man can question. I do not dispute with a Deist, whether Arguments drawn from our own Experience, in Proof of a Deity, be more cogent in themselves, than Motives taken from Authority; but whether a Man can prudently and safely without the Risque of his own eternal Salvation believe the first, and disbelieve the latter, the Trinity, Incarnation, &c. being as well attested as the Deity; and a Man as much bound in Reason to bottom his Faith in the Evidence he has from his Ears, as from Eyes: Both Senses being equally design'd by the Almighty

mighty for Man's Information in the Myſteries of his Maker: Nor does Reason diſcharge one from his Duty more than the other, provided ſuch Motives be ſuggeſted, a prudent Perſon neither can nor ought to queſtion. Seeing then the Proofs of Chriſtianity are ſo pregnant, what Colour can a Deift have to beleive his Eyes, and diſbelieve his Ears? When I am inform'd by the whole World there are ſuch Places as *Rome, Conſtantinople, Paris*, there was ſuch a Man as *William the Conqueror, Henry the VIII. Charles the I.* that he was beheaded by his own Subjects: Should not I be moſt deſervedly hiſs'd and hooted off the Stage, to diſpute the Matters of Fact, tho' I never ſaw theſe Perſons or Places, being Objects of my Ears and not of my Eyes. Seeing I am as fully convinc'd of theſe Truths, as if I had been there in Perſon, had ſeen theſe Places, and convers'd with the Princes themſelves. How then

can we doubt, whether there ever was such a Person as *Jesus Christ* such Men and his Twelve Apostles, that he or they preach'd such Doctrine as the Incarnation, Trinity, &c. wrought such Miracles in View of the whole World in Ratification of these Mysteries, tho' we never saw these holy Personages, nor heard them preach such Doctrines, nor were Eye Witnesses of the working of these Miracles! Mostly when these *Factum's* were recorded in publick Registers, both of Church and State, and attested by the whole World and Annual Feasts and Observances celebrated successively from the Date of our Redemption, in Memory of these Mysteries. Doubtless a Man that will not make use of his Ears for his Instruction as well as his Eyes, deserves to want them.

In fine, Sir, as to those Mysteries in particular which seem mostly to clash with Sense: I cannot conceive how its out of the Power of an
All-

All-powerful God of Nature, to dis-
 pence with the common Course of
 Nature. *Lock* himself above cited
 ascertains us, Let the Mystery be
 never so incomprehensible, *If Reason*
find it reveal'd from God, Reason
declares for it as well as any other
Truth, and makes it one of her Di-
ctates. For it's an over-valuing our
selves, as the same Author observes,
c. 10. to reduce all to the narrow Mea-
sure of our Capacities, and to conclude
all Things impossible to be done, whose
Manner of doing exceeds our Compre-
hension. Besides, tho' the Revelation
 were not only above our Reason,
 but seemingly against Reason: That
 Repugnancy would not discharge
 our Obligation of believing it: For
 how many Truths are there, which
 may seem to countervene Reason?
 Unless we'll pretend to an infinite
 Knowledge to comprehend all know-
 able Things, and an immense Grasp
 of Understanding, to unriddle all
 enigmatical Truths. But the My-
 steries

series of Christianity, tho' they be above Reason, are not so much as seemingly repugnant thereto. Now for a Deist to believe several mysterious Truths, which are as I may say, out of his Reach, and seem to clash with his own Notions, upon the Authority of others, whom he takes to be more learned than himself in their particular Sciences, and yet to refuse Assent to Truths confirm'd by greater Authority because they seem something cross upon his Idea's, is, to act against Reason, by which alone he pretends to direct his Course : So Sir, whatever Disparity you may find between the Creed of a Christian and that of a Deist, I think I have sufficiently prov'd, that a Christian acts much more rationally ; and by Consequence your Passion must overrule your Judgment to a great Degree, if you persist in your Principles, and still pretend to follow Reason for your Guide.

To

To conclude, as *Chrisis* has been favourable in giving Attention to your Plea, so I hope she will do Justice to the Merits of my Cause: I have prov'd that the Deist, who expects to be credited in what he affirms, must of Necessity admit the Force of Authority; now, if we are to credit some Body besides our selves, and this be allowed and practis'd by all Mankind who believe there is such a Thing in the World as moral Honesty, (I hope the Deist will not disband from human Society) it follows evidently, that the same Trust is to be given to the Dead, tho' they preceded us several Ages (for they were not less creditable in their Time than we are now) provided we be ascertain'd that what they deliver'd has not been chang'd or alter'd; in after Ages; but again I have prov'd, that what we take upon their Authority in the Points of our Belief has not been chang'd
or

or alter'd ; I have shew'd by all those Proofs which can be requir'd by the most cautious Man, both that the Myſteries of Chriſtian Religion are Myſteries reveal'd and authoriz'd by God himſelf, and that from *Chriſt's* Time (who was the divine Author of this Religion) they have been brought down to our Days without any reasonable Suſpicion of Innovation ; I have drive you out of all your Holds, I have answer'd and refuted whatever you could alledge in your own Defence, and I wiſh you may prove as ready to correct your Fault, as *Chriſtis*, to whoſe Tribunal you appeal'd, is to condemn it.

Chri. I muſt own, *Philautus*, I I ſhould be highly pleas'd with the Eſteem the Deist ſeems to put upon me, did they not abuſe my Name, and diſhonour me by the very Tribute they ſeem to pay to me : I was willing to hear your Cauſe with Patience, and to give you

you full Leave to plead in your own Defence, least you should have some Colour to blame my Partiality; but this being done, I must do my self that Justice to disown Liberty cloaked under the spacious Pretence of Reason. You stand up for an uncontrollable Liberty of thinking what you please in Points of Religion, and then you flatter yourselves, or blind your Followers with the Name of Piety, because you pretend to ground your Faith in the very Disposition and Order of the supreme Master you adore, who guides Man by Reason, which according to your Principles countenances this Liberty; but away with this Mask; pierce deeper into the Deists Breast: Pleasure charms; he is resolv'd to purchase it at any Rate: He takes a Liberty of acting without Controul; and least the Knowledge of Christian Truths should give a Check to his Disorders, from the Liberty of acting as
he

he pleases, he soon passes to a Liberty of thinking without Restraint; that is, to sin more freely he'll believe Nothing, and turns Deist to play the Libertine. This, *Philautus*, is the true State of the Case, however you strive to disguise it: Now if you desire to be convinc'd of the Truth, leave off sinning and you'll begin to believe: If you'll appeal to my Tribunal, let us see you act according to my Dictamens. Reason tells you, that a greater Value is to be put on an immortal Soul, than on the fading Pleasures of Sense; that it's a Folly to sacrifice an Eternity of Joys, to incur an Eternity of Pain, and this to gratify an inordinate and brutish Passion; that Man was not plac'd here to live like a Brute, and in the End vanish into Nothing, but that he and all Things else with Time pass, that he is advancing towards an other Life, for which he is to provide; until you convince me by
your

your Life and Actions, that these Principles are the Rule of your Morals, I'll never persuade my self, you take Reason for Guide, in the Points of your Belief: So that, *Philautus*, if you would gain Credit with me, first convince the World by your Life and Manners that you act like a Rational, after this it will not be hard to determine, even according to Reason, what you are to believe; till this be done, however you pretend to follow Reason for your Standard, I shall be still convinc'd, that Liberty under the Mask of Reason is the Rule of your Credentials.

F I N I S.



